



UN-HABITAT

Rapid Urban Sector Profiling for Sustainability

UN-HABITAT
**United Nations Human
Settlements Programme**



Background

The methodology for Rapid Urban Sector Profiling for Sustainability was developed by the Regional Office for Africa and the Arab States (ROAAS) and sister units within the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), supported by a contribution from the Government of Italy. Initially, projects were to be carried out in ten countries. This number was later increased in response to requests from the sister units, supported by funding from UN-HABITAT's global programmes and Technical Cooperation projects.

Rapid Urban Sector Profiling contributes to urban poverty reduction policy development at local, national and regional levels. The Profile assesses needs-and-response mechanisms as a contribution to the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Policies are directed to support activities including capacity-building, advocacy and knowledge management as well as operational activities. The approach is based on the Urban Sector Profile Study standard Terms of Reference developed by the European Commission (EC) and already implemented by UN-HABITAT in Somalia. At the city level, local urban issues and needs are identified through a participatory rapid assessment, with the development of a city profile to be verified in a city consultation where priorities are identified and agreed upon. A national analysis and consultation is undertaken to agree on national themes, issues and response mechanisms. This combination results in a national urban profile for each country which identifies gaps and priority areas of intervention. The analysis can then be taken a step further to the regional/sub-regional level where national findings will be used to arrive at regional trends and recommendations for urban poverty reduction. The main crosscutting themes analysed are urban governance, shelter and slum conditions, gender, the urban environment and local economic development.

The Profile provides inputs to Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) documents as well as national plans. Participating cities will be able to prioritise areas in need of intervention for follow-up capacity-building and capital investment projects.

Countries in the programme include:

Eastern and Southern Africa Region:

Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia

Western and Central Africa Region:

Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, DRC, the Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal

Arab States Region:

Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Sharjah, Somalia, Sudan

Objectives

The Urban Sector Profile assesses existing urban management in regulatory and institutional practice and policy development and implementation at the national and city levels. It aims to provide a framework to evaluate urban sector interventions which will improve the prospects of the urban sector and alleviate poverty through sustainable development strategies. It is expected to enhance national and local capacity to implement policies, strategies and programmes within UN-HABITAT's mandate, with a special focus on reduction of urban poverty and response to disasters. It is also expected to increase awareness of UN-HABITAT's global campaigns, expand knowledge of regional urban trends and enhance the development of policies to address these trends. In addition, it will improve UN-HABITAT's ability to respond to requests for technical assistance and policy advice at the national and local levels.

Outputs

The outputs aim to support efforts to meet the MDGs through political and practical means and by integrating urban issues within various national development policies. Results and conclusions aim to identify capacity-building gaps and, where applicable, projects identified as priorities.

The programme will help UN-HABITAT, donors and other partners to better design UN-HABITAT's future work programmes, guide countries in policy definition while influencing PRSP and UNDAF processes, identify areas of technical assistance and interventions to improve the implementation of the UN-HABITAT Agenda, and guide donors in supporting sub-regions at the national level. It will also help raise the awareness of national governments about local and national urban issues so as to include urban issues in an integrated way in their development planning exercises, support governments in focusing on urban issues to be addressed with national and donor funding, and identify priority projects for future implementation at the national level.

Local authorities will be assisted to raise awareness about local issues, will be provided with tools to address urban issues and supported in focusing on urban issues to be addressed with local, national and donor funding, and will be able to identify priority projects for future implementation at the local level through partnerships with civil society and the private sector.

Methodology

Preparatory methodological work at UN-HABITAT Head Quarters has developed two interviews, one at the national level and the other at the city level, as well as guidelines on content and format. The fast track profiling approach ensures that the study captures not only key common concerns on urban issues, but more importantly that it provides insights into the gaps, constraints and challenges currently hindering institutions at various levels and spheres in addressing these issues and playing their roles effectively.

The assessment includes a focus on meeting relevant MDGs and reducing poverty, and encompasses a number of key themes: shelter and slum conditions; local governance; gender; urban environment; and local economic development.

Information is collected at the city and national levels, resulting in the production of a City Urban Sector Profile and a National Urban Sector Profile, each of which translate the priorities identified at that level into implementable projects.

RUSPS methodology summary

- i. Urban Sector Profiling*
 - Orientation of key national and donor stakeholders
 - Data collection through desk study, interviews and meetings
 - Development of draft profile
 - City consultation to agree on priorities
 - Profile finalization and dissemination
 - Regional level analysis
- ii. Feasibility study development for priority projects*
- iii. Implementation of follow up activities*
 - Capacity building at local, national and regional levels
 - Implementation of programmes and projects

Regional level analyses then follow, which include a synthesis of the national profiles by sub-region and translate the priorities identified into policy and technical capacity building projects and activities. The regional level analyses are discussed in regional consultations and then fed into global forums such as the World Urban Forum (WUF) and S-DEV.

Follow-up Activities

Urban Profile Studies are action oriented. It is expected Profile findings will result in activities at local, national and regional levels. Follow-up activities include the development of feasibility studies, the inclusion of priority needs in national programmes, and the implementation of programmes and projects on the ground. In addition, it is expected that the Profiles will lead to regional policy workshops to facilitate the development of key policies such as participatory slum upgrading, improvement of local government, gender mainstreaming in human settlements and urban environmental improvement, and the development of capacity building tools to address agreed regional priorities. This activity will be undertaken by external support agencies including UN-HABITAT who will include such needs in their work plans. UN-HABITAT has submitted a proposal for funding of follow-up activities to the European Commission to support countries who have completed their Profiles in implementing their priority projects.



Results achieved to date

- i. **Development of a corporate methodology:** Seven key Habitat units have collaborated in the development of the methodology and tools.
- ii. **Co-financing of RUSPS by several donors including Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and UN-HABITAT.**
- iii. **Enlarged scope of RUSPS:** Over 25 countries and 75 cities are now participating in the programme.
- iv. **UN-HABITAT implementation and backstopping:** Over 30 UN-HABITAT professionals at Head Quarters and Habitat Programme Manager are participating in the development of the methodology and in backstopping the national teams.
- v. **Acceptance of methodology by other agencies and programmes:** Several spin off projects have taken place recently including projects in the Asia region and the Arab States. The World Bank Cities Alliance (CA) is also funding a new project where seven new cities will participate in RUSPS.
- vi. **Capacity building at national and local levels.**
- vii. **Awareness building on sustainable urban development.**
- viii. **Completed studies:** About 12 countries have completed RUSPS in 2005.
- ix. **Impact on academia:** The methodology has been included in the teaching of national universities.
- x. **Inclusion in international meetings and donor visibility:** RUSPS has been discussed in important international consultations and forums, including the World Urban Forum II (Barcelona, September 2004), the EC-UN-HABITAT Joint Workshop (Nairobi, January 2005), a networking event at the UN-HABITAT Governing Council (Nairobi, April 2005) and S-DEV (Geneva, October 2005). Future meetings are planned for WUF III and other international fora as the opportunities arise.
- xi. **Strengthening ties with the EC, ACP Secretariat and donors:** UN-HABITAT is striving to formalise relationships with international bodies including the EC headquarters, the EC ACP Secretariat and the GOI among others to follow up on activities
- xii. **Follow up activities:** A follow-up Programme Document has been developed and submitted to the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Secretariat at the EC (ACP).



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